



NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

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SUBJECT: Advisory committee formed to update shoreland protection rules

MADISON, Wis. – A diverse advisory committee convenes Nov. 21 in Rosholt to begin updating shore protection rules with a goal of better protecting publicly owned lakes and rivers while providing landowners more flexibility in how they develop their waterfront property.

The newly created group, which has 25 members, is charged with helping Department of Natural Resources staff revise 34-year-old shoreland protection standards overwhelmed by a rapid pace and pattern of development. Those standards are intended to protect water quality, scenic beauty, fish and wildlife habitat, and recreation in lakes and rivers in unincorporated areas by setting minimum lot sizes, how far structures need to be set back from the water, and limits on clearing shoreline trees and other plants. Counties are required to adopt and enforce these minimum state standards or can choose to adopt more protective ones.

“What we’ve tried to do with this advisory committee is get a broad view geographically and interest-wise to help us balance public and private rights,” says Al Shea, who directs the DNR Bureau of Watershed Management. “We wanted to have people who have to live with the rules every day because they own waterfront property or they develop and sell it, people who have to interpret, administer and enforce the rules, and people who represent the public’s interest in clean water, scenic beauty, good habitat and recreational opportunities.”

Groups invited to participate on the advisory committee include waterfront property owners, developers, local government officials, conservation groups, agricultural interests, and property rights advocates. [Find a full listing at the bottom of this release.]

Those groups have selected their representatives, who will gather next week and in December in Rosholt for introductory sessions to launch what’s envisioned as a multi-year process that relies on a

(more)

core work group to make the logistics of meeting workable, yet also maximizes public involvement opportunities.

The advisory committee will help develop options to be shared with the general public at a series of statewide listening sessions in fall 2003. Feedback from those sessions will shape the draft package of rules proposed for public hearings in late fall 2004. In addition, materials the advisory committee members receive for their meetings will be available on the DNR Web site, as well as copies of research underpinning the review and revision. From the DNR Web site home page <<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us>> use the “Go to some topics” drop down menu and select “shoreland management.”

“The advisory committee will be the beginning – they’ll react, add to and modify options we provide and come up with their preferred options,” says Toni Herkert, the DNR shoreland management specialist leading the review process. “But those options are just that – options – and we’ll take them out to get public reaction at listening sessions next fall. We also have planned other opportunities to make sure the public can comment on how the options can be modified to better fit the sentiment of the public at large.”

Lawmakers created the shoreland management program in 1966, responding to concerns that development was threatening water quality, scenic beauty and habitat along lakes – all public rights protected under Wisconsin’s Constitution and courts’ interpretations of it.

DNR, university, and other experts wrote the minimum standards based on the science and political realities of the time, according to a 1997 EPA-funded review of the standards. Counties were required to adopt, for unincorporated areas, the minimum state standards or more protective ones by 1968. Since then, the number of dwellings on northern Wisconsin lakes of all sizes has increased an average of 216 percent, and as much as 800 percent on some lakes. The scarcity of desirable waterfront property has pushed development into sensitive small, shallow lakes, steep slopes and wetlands, and people have been expanding or tearing down existing homes and building bigger new ones on the same lots.

The 1997 review of the standards found them inadequate to protect water quality, habitat and natural beauty. As well, the standards contained clauses that are difficult for counties to interpret and enforce, which has created loopholes that thwarted their intent of the standards, the review authors concluded.

The 25 people on the advisory committee and the group or interest they represent are:

- Todd Ambs, Wisconsin River Alliance
 - Ken Anderson, Wisconsin Conservation Congress
 - Miles Benson, Governor’s Council on Forestry
 - William Pielsticker, Trout Unlimited
 - Earl Cook, Springbrook, waterfront property representative
- (more)

- Scott Craven, University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Wildlife Ecology
- Jerry Deschane, Wisconsin Builders Association
- Michael Dresen, University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, Center for Land Use Education
- Phillip Gaudet, Wisconsin County Code Administrators, Washington County
- Jill Geisthardt, waterfront property representative
- Elmer Goetsch, Wisconsin Association of Lakes
- Karl Kastrosky, Wisconsin County Code Administrators, Bayfield County
- Paul Kent, attorney, Davis & Kuelthau, S.C., Madison
- Pam LaBine, Wisconsin County Code Administrators, Forest County
- John Larson, Applied Ecological Services, Inc.
- Tom Larson, Wisconsin Realtors Association
- Paul McGinley, University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point College of Natural Resources
- Chip Nielsen, Vilas County Planning & Zoning Committee
- Mark O’Connell, Wisconsin Counties Association
- Nancy Russell, Walworth County Planning & Zoning Committee
- Glenn Schiffmann, Natural Resources Board appointee
- Richard Stadelman, Wisconsin Towns Association
- Roland O. Tonn, Wisconsin Chapter of the American Planning Association
- Jim Wise, Environmentally Concerned Citizens of Lakeland Areas
- Paul Zimmerman, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation